

Children's Ear Nose & Throat Center

Sub-specialists of Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas

A member of the  Seton Healthcare Family

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Otorrhea Management

With ear tubes in place, ear infections will present with otorrhea (ear drainage) from the ear canal. **Ear drainage may be white, yellow, and sometimes green or bloody, all of which are normal.** Drainage can be thin or very thick. Whenever you see ear drainage, treat with the antibiotic drops (e.g. Ciprodex, Ofloxacin, Otovel) that were provided to you after surgery. You should have refills at your pharmacy, however if you are unable to obtain ear drops, please contact our clinic for a new prescription.

Tips For Treating Ear Drainage

- Antibiotic drops should be used twice a day for 7 days to completely treat the ear infection and clear away any remaining debris in the ear canal. 4-5 drops at a time are recommended.
- Gently pull the ear slightly down and back to help straighten the ear canal for easier delivery of the medication. Administer one drop at a time, allowing the drop to flow down the ear canal before instilling the next.
 - *Warming the drops to near body temperature by holding the container in the palm of your hands or in your pocket for a few minutes may improve comfort.
- After the antibiotic drops are placed, gently pushing on the tragus (the small piece of cartilage just in front of the ear canal) five times can help propel the medication down the ear canal and into the ear tube.
- For thick drainage, clean the ear with hydrogen peroxide drops prior to instilling the antibiotic drops.
 - Place 2-3 drops of hydrogen peroxide into the ear canal and let sit for a few minutes. The drainage will bubble and fizz.
 - *Please note that the bubbling may be loud to your child and can appear uncomfortable, but the peroxide does not burn the ear canal as it does when you are treating a wound.
 - Wick away any drainage and peroxide from the outer ear and canal with a cloth. Avoid using q-tips to prevent risk of injury.
- NEVER use an alcohol based ear drop (i.e. swimmer's ear drops) when ear tubes are in place, as it will cause severe pain and burning sensation.
- There are no water restrictions with ear tubes, however when there is an active ear infection, it is best to avoid water exposure to promote healing.
- Routine nose care with saline and suctioning can help improve nasal and middle ear health and may help to reduce the severity and frequency of ear drainage episodes.

When to contact your Provider

If ear drainage is persisting longer than 1 week with proper treatment, or if there are concerns for any swelling or redness of the outer ear, please contact our office for guidance.